

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2110
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
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USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2439

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 8943

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDIP IN UK
SUBJECT: DELHI PRESS COVERAGE OF PM DESAI'S LONDON AND BRUSSELS
VISITS

1. PRIME MINISTER DESAI'S SECOND DAY IN LONDON WAS AGAIN
FRONT-PAGE NEWS IN THIS MORNING'S DELHI PAPERS. THE
INDIAN WIRE SERVICE DISPATCHES ARE DEVOTED MAINLY TO
DESAI'S WARM PRAISE OF INDO-BRITISH RELATIONS EXPRESSED
AT THE LORD MAYOR'S JUNE 7 LUNCHEON. SEVERAL PAPERS
ALSO CARRY ACCOUNTS BY THEIR LONDON CORRESPONDENTS OF
THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CALLAGHAN TALKS. THESE REPORTS,
APPARENTLY BASED ON BACKGROUND BRIEFINGS, MENTION THAT
SUBJECTS DISCUSSED BY THE TWO PMS INCLUDED THE NORTH-
SOUTH DIALOGUE, NUCLEAR POLICY, CHINA, POSSIBLE SALE OF
JAGUAR AIRCRAFT TO INDIA AND DEVELOPMENTS IN AFRICA AND
AFGHANISTAN. THESE CORRESPONDENTS AND ALSO THE INDIAN
WIRE SERVICES REPORT THAT THERE WERE DIFFERENCES OF
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APPROACH BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES REGARDING RHODESIA AND
NAMIBIA AS WELL AS ZAIRE.

2. MOST DELHI PAPERS ALSO CARRY ACCOUNTS OF DESAI'S
MEETING WITH OPPOSITION LEADER MRS. THATCHER. IN WHAT
WAS DESCRIBED AS A "FRANK" DISCUSSION, THE TWO ARE REPORTED
TO HAVE EXCHANGED VIEWS ON THE U.K.'S IMMIGRATION

POLICY. IN ADDITION, MRS. THATCHER AND PM DESAI ARE REPORTED TO HAVE DIFFERED ON THE METHODS OF RESOLVING VARIOUS AFRICAN DISPUTES. WHILE MRS. THATCHER REPORTEDLY VOICED ACCEPTANCE OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA, DESAI SAID IT WOULD NEVER WORK WITHOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. SIMILARLY, THEY ARE REPORTED TO HAVE DISAGREED ON NAMIBIA (WITH DESAI URGING THAT WALVIS BAY BE CONSIDERED AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE TERRITORY) AND ON ZAIRE. ON THE LATTER SUBJECT, DESAI REPORTEDLY TOLD MRS. THATCHER THAT ONLY THE OAU SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN PEACEKEEPING EFFORTS.

3. TODAY'S "INDIAN EXPRESS" CARRIES AN INSIDE PAGE ARTICLE FROM MARION B. BYWATER, DATELINED JUNE 7 BRUSSELS AND HEADLINED "PM APPRECIATES BELGIAN ROLE IN ZAIRE." THE CORRESPONDENT WRITES THAT IN HIS MEETINGS WITH GOB LEADERS "MR. DESAI IS UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING FOR THE HUMANITARIAN NATURE OF THE RECENT INTERVENTION BY BELGIAN PARATROOPS IN ZAIRE" AND ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS INTERVENTION CAME ONLY WITH PRESIDENT MOBUTU'S APPROVAL. DESAI IS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE URGED THAT ANY DECISION ON A PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN AFRICA SHOULD BE LEFT TO THE AFRICANS THEMSELES. ACCORDING TO THIS ACCOUNT, PM DESAI AND PM TINDEMANS ALSO DISCUSSED CHINA AND DISARMAMENT. THIS "INDIAN EXPRESS" ARTICLE IS THE ONLY ONE WE HAVE SEEN THUS FAR IN THE DELHI PRESS WHICH UNCLASSIFIED

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SUBSTANTIVELY TREATS DESAI'S MEETINGS WITH BELGIAN LEADERS.

4. BOTH THE "INDIAN EXPRESS" AND "STATESMAN" CARRY ACCOUNTS FROM LONDON THAT THE GOI FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE MAY VISIT PEKING LATER THIS YEAR. CITING INFORMED SOURCES, THESE REPORTS SAY THAT THE POSSIBLITY OF SUCH A VISIT WAS RAISED DURING VAJPAYEE'S MEETING WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN.
BLOOD

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